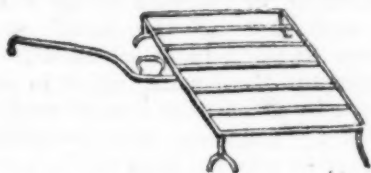


# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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"The House of Commons represents all the Commons of the realm, and the consent of the House of Commons binds the consent of all the Commons of the Realm; and, no man is, or can be, represented, who hath not a vote in the election of his representative."—*Bill brought into the House of Lords by the late DUKE OF RICHMOND.*

## TO THE MARQUIS OF BLANDFORD. ON THE SUBJECT OF PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

*Barn-Elm Farm, 16th July, 1829.*

MY LORD,

WITH feelings of great respect, I address your Lordship upon the subject of a letter signed by you, and published in *The STANDARD* newspaper of the 13th of this present month, a copy of which letter, as it is to be the text whereon I have to remark, I here insert; though I have published it once before.

*"Hastings, 11th July, 1829.*

SIR,

"The oftener I read over the address, which appeared in your paper of the 9th instant, bearing the signatures of Messrs. Cobbett and Hunt, the more I see reason to notice one part of it, lest my silence should be mischievously construed into assent.

"Sincerely as I desire to witness a rational and constitutional reform in the Commons House of Parliament, I never will stand forward the wild advocate of voting by ballot or universal suffrage; both of them a species of universal confusion, both inventions of modern date, unfounded in reason;

and totally unknown to our laws, at any period of their history.

"Upon these two points, then, Messrs. Cobbett and Hunt (whom I otherwise respect for their talents and patriotism), and myself, are as wide as the poles asunder; and, although fully sensible of the fearful odds it may be in their power to oppose to me, I shall not be apprehensive of maintaining my own views and convictions, independent of such doctrines.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

"BLANDFORD."

The declaration of Mr. Hunt and myself called upon the reformers to stand by our old plan of annual Parliaments, universal suffrage, and voting by ballot. That we have a right to annual Parliaments is not denied by your Lordship; and I, therefore, look upon that point as being conceded to us; and yet, as to any written law of this country, there is none for annual Parliaments any more than for the other two things for which we contend. It is very true, that until the time of the STUARTS nobody ever dreamed of any thing but of a Parliament called as often as it was wanted, and no man ever thought of such a thing as the meeting of a Parliament without a new election, except perhaps in an instance or two, in the reign of the tyrant HENRY the EIGHTH. For Parliaments to be elected for a term of years is a thing of quite a modern date: the practice of passing an annual batch of laws is a thing quite new: laws were passed only upon extraordinary occasions; and if your Lordship will look at your copy of the Statute Book, you will find that the laws which have been passed since the late King came to the throne, exceed in bulk ten times all the laws that ever were passed in England before!

The BILL of RIGHTS, as it is called, says, and very ridiculously, that Parlia-

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ments *ought to be frequently held*. Soon after that, an Act was passed to prevent any one Parliament from existing for any longer period than *three years*. Not long after this, a Parliament, which had been elected for three years, determined to sit for *seven*, without consulting the people upon the subject: thus the thing has continued from that time to this; and I shall only observe further upon this part of the subject, that this change in the law was effected by men calling themselves *WHIGS*, and as if inconsistencies and absurdities were never to end, their pretence was, that if they suffered the people to make another election at the end of the three years, there would be danger of a re-introduction of *popery and slavery*! Curious enough this; that the *WHIGS* should now be the advocates of what is called *popery and slavery*; and that your Lordship should see the necessity of a reform, in order to keep out that *popery and slavery*! This is a strange turn; but it only shows that there is a something which is wanted to change the present state of things.

With regard to the other two topics, beginning with *UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE*, I may, I hope, without giving offence, be permitted to observe, that your Lordship was certainly a little off your guard yourself, when you, by implication at least, denominated me a *wild advocate* of these doctrines. I pretend to no superior sagacity or superior seriousness; but I have always argued the question with great coolness, and have appealed to that *reason*, which your Lordship appears to think I now wholly set aside. Your Lordship says, that universal suffrage is an invention of *modern date*. I will not go back to Saxon times; I will not go back to the practice after the Norman Conquest; but will make my stand upon the principles of the laws and constitution. In the first place, it is a well known maxim of the law, that "*no man should be taxed without his own consent*"; of which I shall have to speak more fully by-and-by. The laws of England have always held, that every man, not a *bondman*, ought to have a voice in making or

assenting to the laws, either by himself or his representative in Parliament. *SIR THOMAS SMITH*, a great lawyer and privy councillor in the reign of *QUEEN ELIZABETH*, in his work called "*The Commonwealth of England*," says, "*every Englishman is intended to be present in Parliament, either in person or by procuration and attorney, of what pre-eminence, state, or quality soever he may be, from the Prince to the lowest person in England.*" The book of the *Assizes*, which is a book of great authority, says, that laws to bind all must be *assented to by all*. And how are all to assent to laws, if only part have a voice in choosing those who have power to make the laws?

*BLACKSTONE*, who was a court-lawyer, and in modern times too, could not blink this great principle without oversetting the whole of his "*Commentary*." He says, in Book I. Chap. 2, "*Every man is, in judgment of law, party to making an Act of Parliament, being present thereat by himself or by his representative.*" And as a clencher to all that any one has ever written upon the subject, he says, in Book IV. Chap. I. "*The Lawfulness of punishing criminals is founded on this principle, that the law by which they suffer was made by their own consent.*"

Now, my Lord, what can be urged in answer to this? How is it possible to explain the meaning of these plain words; and who is to root out of men's minds principles like these, if once implanted there? And is it just, my Lord, to call our principles "*wild*" and *novel*, and to assert that they lead to universal confusion? Is it, above all things, correct to say, that they are "*totally unknown*" to our laws at any period of our history? Now, my Lord, with very sincere respect for you, and without any desire to avail myself of any advantage that I may possess in order to obtain a triumph over you in argument, let me ask you this question. If the *lawfulness* of punishing a criminal be founded upon the principle, that he has given his assent to the law that punishes him, is he not punished *unlawfully* if the punishment proceed from a law to which he has not

given his assent ? And will your Lordship contend, that he has given his assent, when the present law forbids him to have any thing to do in choosing those who make the laws ?

So much for the *law* of the case ; and now for the *equity*. I have observed before, that the grand maxim of the constitution is, that *no man* shall be *taxed* without his own consent. This was the great principle that our ancestors expressed in their standing cry of "*liberty and property*:" this was the grand principle; an attempt to violate which, severed from England one of her four limbs, which is now become a mighty republic, and by far the most formidable foe that England has. The American resistance, and revolution, and independence were announced to the world in the four words: "*LIBERTY, PROPERTY, NO STAMP ACT*"; words which rang through the country like the phrase of old: "*To your tents, O Israel*." In those tents the arms were hung up ready for battle ; and the four words just mentioned, armed every man in AMERICA, except the dastardly and selfish and servile few, who have since had to creep about the world, without daring to own their native country. The Americans had no objection at all to be taxed, provided they were taxed by their own consent. They most humbly prayed to be subjected to no taxes otherwise imposed ; this very same Septennial Parliament and its advocates contended that they were represented as completely as the people of *Yorkshire* were ; and they spoke very nearly the truth ; but the people of America were not content with *virtual representation* : they stood upon the good old laws of their forefathers, the maxims of which I have now had the honour to state to your Lordship : the Septennial "*Collective*" turned a deaf ear to their remonstrances and prayers ; and the result was a debt to England, a farthing of which is not yet paid off ; deep disgrace to her arms, and danger for the future, of which danger we are at this moment tasting.

Now, my Lord, as to the *practice* in the middle age. It is not necessary to trouble ourselves with inquiries with re-

gard to the precise extent of *suffrage* which existed up to the reign of the virtuous and pious, though weak, King HENRY the VIth : it is not the abuses that we ought to be desirous to imitate ; but the sound principles pointed out by law, and sanctioned by reason. The nation is in a state wholly different from what it was even down to the reign of the last of the STUARTS. For many centuries the *Commons* of England, that is to say, the common people, knew nothing of a tax ; when a poll-tax was attempted to be imposed upon them they resisted, and laudably resisted ; and the tax was given up. If your Lordship look into that history to which you have appealed, you will find, that even down to that Reformation, that demolition of popery, of which your Lordship seems to be so much enamoured, the English *Commons* knew nothing of taxes ; that, generally speaking, the King's family, his household, his officers, even his Judges, were maintained out of his own private estate, and out of those rights which he had with regard to the property of tenants of the Crown ; that when additional money was wanted, it was given under the name of subsidies ; and paid either on wool exported, or by the knights on their fees ; that is to say, in proportion to the amount of the value of their property in land, a considerable portion of it always being paid by the clergy out of their land revenues. In the case of wars of a pressing nature, the King and the nobles, and the clergy, raised the force at their own expense ; so that the common people really knew nothing of taxes. Then the clergy maintained all the poor and necessitous out of the tithes and other revenues of the Church ; there were no poor-rates necessary, and no Church-rates. Personal service was demanded of none, except he were able to come forth mounted ; the clergy held a convocation concurrently with the Session of the Parliament ; and they took care of the interest of all the poorer classes ; so that these classes, whether it was the practice for them all to vote or not, were totally exempt from the burthen of taxation, and secure against all the miseries which it inflicts ; but now, my Lord,

every man is taxed : as HORNE TOOKE said, " even the wretch that picks up " the orange peel in the streets to satisfy " his craving hunger." Mr. PRESTON, the celebrated conveyancer, published a pamphlet some years ago, in which he contended, that out of every 18*l.* a-year, earned by a labourer, he had to pay 10*l.* in taxes.

Upon what ground, then, has your Lordship been pleased to question the *reasonableness* of universal suffrage ? In order to entangle us in difficulties, it has been said (and that pompous and droll gentleman, JERRY BENTHAM, has lent his hand in the work), that we ought to include *women* as well as men, because they pay taxes too. Women are excluded by the very nature of their sex, as much as they are from being Judges, soldiers, or sailors. The DUKE of RICHMOND's definition of universal suffrage is quite sufficient ; namely, " it is the " right of every commoner of this realm " (infants, persons of insane mind, and " criminals incapacitated by law only " excepted) to HAVE A VOTE in the " election of the representative who is " to give his consent to the making of " laws by which he is to be bound."

But, there is still another reason, for every man, except as before excepted, to have a vote. Infants, persons of insane mind, and criminals, set aside by the law, cannot be called upon to serve in the militia, or to arm for the defence of the country. Every other man may be, and every other man is so called upon. And, to repeat what I have recently said elsewhere, shall the lord, or the squire, or any body else, who has property to defend, pretend that the *defender of the property* has not as good a right to vote for representatives in Parliament as he has ! What would your Lordship think, of a letter, for instance, addressed by a landowner to the labourers of the parish in which he resides, and containing the following words : " Next Monday you " are to quit your wives and families, and " fathers and mothers, come to such a " place, take such arms as shall be given " you, march whither you shall be ordered, fight and risk your lives if it be " necessary in defence of me and of my

" property ; but, at the next election, I " will vote for the person that is to pass " laws to tax you and affect your lives ; " and *you shall have no vote at all*, not " because you have got no lives ; not because you pay no taxes ; but because " you have not got so much land as I " have." Why, my Lord, would not every man of them have a right to strike this feeble and impotent and insolent wretch to the ground ! What ! call upon men to come forth to defend your property and your life, and tell them, at the same time, that they are unworthy to be entrusted with the power of giving a vote, in the choice of those who are to make the laws affecting their own property and their own lives ! To tell them that their claim is *unfounded in reason*, and that they ought to be represented by persons chosen by those for whose safety they have been called upon to venture their lives !

Any thing so monstrous as this certainly never was heard of before ; and, I must do our opponents the justice to say, that they never have attempted to defend principles so outrageously offensive to common sense and common justice. No : their objection to universal suffrage is, that it would be *impossible in practice* ; and that, in the words of your Lordship, it would be a "*species of universal confusion*." On this point, then, I take them up ; and, after asking whether there be *universal confusion* in the UNITED STATES of AMERICA, I will come to our own country. In almost the whole of the STATES of AMERICA, not only is the suffrage universal, exactly according to the DUKE of RICHMOND's definition ; but there, they carry the principle into the election, not only of the two houses of the legislature, but into that of the Chief Magistrates (the President and the Governors), and into that of the Sheriffs of Counties and Towns, who are all elected for certain periods. And, my Lord, is there universal confusion in that country, which has been FIFTY-THREE YEARS independent, the population of which has increased in that time from *three millions to twelve*, in which country has grown up a navy able to contend with our's single-handed, and a commercial marine fast becoming equal to our



own; is that a country of "*universal confusion*?" In the whole of the *fifty-three* years, there has been but one single commotion; and that was in consequence of an *excise law*, which was soon afterwards repealed. That commotion was put down upon the bare appearance of the Chief Magistrate, surrounded by not a soul but *volunteer citizens*; while in our country, where, God knows, we are far from suffrage universal; where it is either suffrage by corruption, or suffrage by property, scarcely a period of five years at a time ever passes, without *disturbed districts*, *Power-of-imprisonment Bills*, *marching of soldiers against the people*, *firing upon the people*, *laws about sedition*, *laws to prevent the people from assembling*, *people killed or trampled down by soldiers*; and the scaffold streaming with the blood of innumerable persons executed for *treason*!

And, will it be said, that our situation relatively to the enemy has been more perilous than that of the UNITED STATES? Our country has never been invaded, except in one instance in Ireland, within the memory of man. The territory of America has been twice invaded by numerous and formidable armies, its coasts ravaged, its harbours crowded with hostile men of war; its capital set in flames by an enemy, and the President, and officers of state, compelled to flee from it. Yet (hear, England, and blush!) no man has ever proposed to pass a *Power-of-imprisonment Bill*; nor has the act of *HABEAS CORPUS* (which they have taken care to preserve) ever been for one moment suspended; but, while the flames were raging in the Session House of the Congress, the words of the PRESIDENT to the people were these: "The Government is *of your own making*, we, its administrators, are men of *your own choosing*, and on *you* I firmly rely for the defence of it and of us." He relied not without good reason: they defended both: they upheld both, and they drove the foe from their country in disgrace.

"Aye!" some one will say; "but the people of AMERICA are different from the people here, and they have not such immense congregations of

"people." They are different: they are well fed and well clad, and lightly worked, and pay hardly any taxes at all. This is *all* the difference, and this difference arises solely from the circumstance, that they have universal suffrage, and that we have not. And, as to great congregations of people, NEW YORK, PHILADELPHIA, and BALTIMORE exceed in population any three places in England, London excepted. There are many other places of great population; but never did any one hear of riots or confusion, though the elections are all annual for MAYOR, ALDERMEN, and other officers in those cities, and though the suffrage is even here also universal.

I might safely rest upon this argument of experience, especially as I have never heard any one attempt to show, why this species of suffrage should lead to confusion, by which is generally meant confusion in the *act of election*. God knows we have confusion enough at our elections. Seldom does an election take place, without troops being called in to assist what is called the "*civil power*." What would the Americans think of dragoons standing with drawn swords to "*protect the freedom of election*," as was the case at PRESTON, the last time. Half the first year of every new Parliament is spent in trials and debates about contested elections. Corruption, bribery; all sorts of crimes and immoralities, of which beastly drunkenness is the least disgraceful of the consequences of this, as it is called, "*exercise of the elective franchise*." In the whole of the *fifty-three* years that universal suffrage has been exercised in America, not a single complaint of undue election has been made to the Congress; and I should be glad to hear, what reason there is for supposing, that a similar cause would produce in England a precisely contrary effect.

We are told of the difficulty of *taking* the election; of the great difficulty of ascertaining who had a right to vote and who had not. Our Government found no difficulty in ascertaining to a shilling the amount of the income of every man in the kingdom: it has found no difficulty in ascertaining how many windows there

are in every house, how many dogs, horses, carriages, servants, shopmen, in every house and yard in every parish. It has found no difficulty in getting at the names, age, state of health, state of limbs, height and bodily strength of every male person in every parish: and could not so clever a Government as this, so all-seeing and all-searching a Government, find out the means of putting down the names of all the male persons in every parish or district, and having them on a list to be given to the officer who is to take the election? The thought itself is nonsense: the question is not a question to put: the Government can do it if it will; and it *does* not, because it *will* not. What "*confusion*," my Lord, could possibly arise if all the elections were taken on the same day, and in the same hours; and if the returns were made up and transmitted all at, or about, the same time? The number of voters would be so great, that bribery and corruption would be impossible: the prize to be contended for would not be what it now is; and we should have no rioting at elections, and no trials and perjury afterwards. To me, nothing appears so easy and so quiet as this mode of election: I have never heard any argument to alter my opinions respecting it; and therefore, that opinion remains what it was twenty years ago; that is to say, ever since I had a fair opportunity of forming a correct opinion upon the subject.

I now come to the second point; namely, *voting by ballot*; and here there is much more to be said in objection. It has been said, that the man who wishes to *hide* his opinion, who wishes to *disguise* the vote that he gives, is unworthy of being entrusted with it. The case has been put thus, and was once put so by myself: that the *ballot*, or secret voting, is wholly unnecessary, if the voter be independent; and that if he be dependent, he must either tell a *lie* (if he wish to vote contrary to the desire of his employer, or one on whom he is dependent), or he must vote agreeably to the will of such person, and that then the *ballot* is of no use; that, therefore, the *ballot* is a dishonourable thing, and

that all men should be excluded from voting, unless the vote were given openly and avowedly. It is very curious, that these very reasons were urged against the American practice, by the ABBÉ MABLY, in his letters to JOHN ADAMS, the second American President, at the time of forming the American federal constitution. The answer which Mr. ADAMS gave was, that the sin of lying, was, in such a case, much less than the sin of *bribery*; and that besides the preservation of the people from the temptation of bribes, the *ballot* was the *great security for perfect peace at elections*.

Now, my Lord, with regard to the *dishonourableness* of the thing, there is *ballotting* for committees in the House of Commons; they vote by *bailot* in the French legislative assemblies; in all the clubs and societies; and in commercial assemblies and companies, the voting is generally by *ballot*; even the members of the *Society for promoting Christian Knowledge* are chosen by *ballot*: and *why*? because the parties voting should be free to follow their own inclination; and by so doing, not expose themselves to the displeasure of the persons voted against, or to that of their friends. The objects and tendency of the *ballot*, in these cases, is to ensure impartiality; and to prevent, and not cause that "*confusion*" of which your Lordship appears to be apprehensive. The voting is pretty nearly universal at Preston: it is quite such with the unjust exclusion of the poorest of the poor. No man that knows any thing about the matter, and that has any regard for truth, will deny, that if the voting had been by *ballot*, I should have been chosen by a majority of ten to one. Whole streets, where the people had enthusiastically promised to vote for me, if *permitted*, poured forth dejected creatures to vote against me. If the voting had been by *ballot* at Preston, the men who voted against me might have *lied* to their masters; but that would have been better than to lie to their *own consciences* and to *God*, which they did, when the dread of starvation drove them to vote against me. The law of last winter has now enabled the Catholics of that town to

vote at elections; but that is useless in such a case, without the ballot. Not only dare not the poor creatures, with the knowledge of their masters vote against those masters' wish; but starvation is their lot, if they refuse to vote *according to that wish*.

It is true, indeed, that the ballot would become of less importance almost immediately after the adoption of reform on the principle of universal suffrage; because that reform, by lightening the burthens of the people, would make them less miserable, and of course less servilely dependent. It would lessen that prodigious inequality in the distribution of wealth, of which Mr. PEEL speaks in terms of such poignant lamentation: it would make the labouring classes more bold in the assertion and exercise of their rights; but still the ballot would have a tendency, as Mr. ADAMS told the ABBÉ MABLEY, to ensure the perfect peace of elections.

If we had had the ballot, I should, indeed, certainly have been returned for Preston at the last Election; and all the traps, the passages, the deal board contrivances; all the tallies and other tricks would have been of no avail. The poor and miserable workmen would have lied to their masters; hunger would have formed an apology for their doing that; but they would have followed the dictates of their conscience in electing me; and if they had elected me, that ruin which is now desolating the country, would have stood a chance, at least, of being prevented. For *myself* it was, perhaps, fortunate that there was not a ballot at Preston; for I am far from being certain that it would have been for my benefit, by which I mean the benefit of my public reputation, to be a member of the "Collective" during the last three years. Things were not, and they are not yet, quite ripe for the effecting of any great change. I should have had, perhaps, not a single man to vote with me upon any proposition of importance. But I should have been *speaking to the whole country* instead of writing to one thousandth part of it: it is impossible that the truths stated in the Register, during the three years,

should not have prevented the execution of the Small-note Bill, *unaccompanied by a great repeal of taxes*. Let us take, for instance, the debate of last year on the effects of this very Bill. GOULBURN said, that as there were *so very few small notes* in comparison with the whole of the money in circulation, the withdrawing of them would *have little or no effect upon prices* or upon trade; and that when the ones were gone, the bankers would be enabled to *make an addition* to their fives, so that the measure would produce no distress at all. I answered this statement, which was repeated by the DUKE of WELLINGTON himself; I showed the gross fallacy of it, I proved that the contrary would be the fact; and I left a doubt in the mind of no intelligent reader, that my view was the correct one. But, in the first place, it was ten days before the nature of my publication would permit the answer to appear at all; and, in the next place, that answer could be read but by comparatively few persons; so that, *as to effect*, in preventing the measure, I produced none at all. Granted, that of the six hundred and fifty-eight members of the "lower Collective," six hundred and fifty odd, at least, would have execrated me and my prophecies, and wished us both at the devil; but, by an answer to GOULBURN, which would have been read in all parts of the kingdom in the course of forty-eight hours from the time it was delivered, and by other speeches made upon the same subject, and by true and clear statements relative to the state of the country; and by making the country see the foolish figure that those men who attempted to support the contrary opinions; by these means I should have excited a spirit of inquiry; the whole of the people would have seen the true cause of the gradual decline of trade and agriculture; they would have anticipated that which is now come, and that worse which is yet to come; and the Government would have been compelled to desist from its fatal measure, or to lessen the taxes. Here, then, my Lord, is one instance of the effect of the want of ballot. To be sure, the "Col-

lective" had to enlighten and to guide it, STANLEY and WOOD, two statesmen, with whose counsels at command it seems strange that the nation should be in a state of suffering: the Collective congratulated itself; and so did the big manufacturers; and so did the far greater part of the landlords and the farmers, the merchants, and the traders: they congratulated themselves that there was no ballot at PRESTON; and they are now most justly tasting the effects. Let us leave them, if it so please your Lordship, to enjoy those effects without alloy; and let me come to the conclusion of my subject.

The voting in America is carried on thus: there is an election in every township of a county, and in every considerable division of a town, or city, if either be very large. Previous to the day of election, three persons are chosen at each place as judges of the election: at the time appointed these meet, sit at a table in a room, the lower sash of the window thrown up, with a ballot box before them, and with a book containing an alphabetical list of the names of the voters, which, in fact, is that of all the males in the township, infants, insane persons, and criminals excluded; for, they are not so unjust as to shut out the poor "because he is poor." The electors come up to the window, and, when recognized by the election judges, they put their ballots into the box. It happens in numerous cases that zealous persons of the two contending parties, are active, near the window, to give to the electors, as they come up, *ballots ready prepared*, exhorting them to put those into the box; and, in such places as PHILADELPHIA, the artizans and labourers generally put in ballots prepared in this way, to save themselves the trouble of writing, or from not being able to write: but, if they can read, they look at the ballot first, and if not they get some one to look at it whom they can trust, unless they well know the man who gives it to them. When the voter has put his ballot into the box, away he goes; and there is seldom any thing worthy of being called a *crowd* collected on the occasion; and I never in my life heard of a single breach

of the peace committed at any one of these thousand of elections, which all take place on one and the same day. When the election is over, the judges take out the ballots, count the numbers, and make their return to the sheriff; and they pack up, at the same time, the ballots themselves: they sign and seal their return: they seal up the packet of ballots; and that very night transmit them to the sheriff, by a special messenger. The sheriff, being joined by others, whom the law associates with him for this purpose, *verifies the return*; and then transmits it to the proper officer under the governor. Here a review of the whole takes place; and after this, the result is officially and publicly declared, the documents being all safely filed and preserved.

Now, my Lord, what "*difficulty*" is there in all this? How is it possible, my Lord, that it can tend to "*universal confusion*?" The passions are as warmly at work in America as ever they were here. Every soul is interested in the concern; but the strife is not concentrated: the passion is diffused over a wide space, and exhausts itself in writing and speaking *before* the election comes on. The candidates never appear in person at the place of election: they cannot, indeed, unless they were made into a great many pieces. They do not even *offer* themselves in print; but are proposed by their friends and partizans; and their merits or demerits are most amply discussed long before the day of election: if they have any faults, they are all well known before the day when they are to be voted for or against. To me, it appears the most surprising thing in the world, that any body should see a cause of *confusion* in a proceeding like this; and especially after it has been tried for fifty-three years, and has been productive of peace unexampled, and more especially still, when we know that the country in which it is in practice, is not only singularly blessed by the freedom, the happiness and prosperity of its people; but that it has carried on two perilous wars, and has defended itself against two perilous invasions, without ever having suspended the Act of Habeas Corpus for a



single hour, and without any law of treason, except as applicable to persons actually coming forth in arms, for the avowed purpose of attacking the government itself. Besides this, we see how great this nation has become: how surprisingly great: how wise, how prudent its government, in all its affairs with foreign nations; how able its chief magistrates; how able its diplomatists; how moderate the views of the Presidents; how modest, and, at the same time, how dignified, in every step they take, how contentedly they retire from power, and with what exemplary affability they return to mix among their fellow citizens. All these, my LORD BLANDFORD, have been the result of universal suffrage and voting by ballot; and, when your Lordship considers these things, I most anxiously hope that you will be disposed to abandon your opinion, and give the people your powerful aid, in the obtaining of a reform upon this foundation.

It is not to be forgotten, that we demand but a mere trifle in comparison of what is possessed by the people in America: they choose the President; they choose the governors of states; they choose *both* the Houses of Assembly. We ask for no such thing; we have an hereditary King; we have an hereditary upper House, neither of which do we ask to change. The country has been very great, free, and happy, with King, Lords, and Commons; and there is no reason that it should not be so again. If there be any thing of fault in the American system, it is in leaving the chief magistrates not quite independent enough; my reasons for thinking which were fully and frankly stated in my "Year's Residence in America," which was first published in America itself. At any rate, we want no such change: we are content with the form of our Government, and with the distribution of its powers, provided only that it be what it **PRETENDS TO BE**; provided that the *Commons* choose the *Commons' House*; provided that we be represented by those who are called our *representatives*; provided that we *do* give our assent to the laws by which our

property is taken from us, and by which we are tried and judged.

Thus, my Lord, I have endeavoured, and I hope not in vain, to convince you that we are right, and that you are wrong; and permit me to hope, that your Lordship will not finally make up your mind to persevere in acting on your present opinions, without at least *hearing some argument* in answer to what I have now done myself the honour to address to your Lordship. Here is my defence of the doctrines, which your Lordship says are "unfounded in reason." I think I have shown that they are founded in reason; that the measures are necessary, and that they are perfectly easy in practice. If some one shall take up the gauntlet, which I thus throw down, and show that I am in error, then your Lordship will be fully justified in adhering to your present opinions. Waiting for such showing, or for such endeavour to show, I retain the opinions which I have expressed, along with that respect for your Lordship, with which I am

Your Lordship's

Most humble and  
most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

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TO THE  
DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

Barn-Elm Farm, 16th July, 1829.

MY LORD DUKE,

I HAVE some facts to lay before you, relative to the *state of the country*; but first there has been a transaction in the French Legislature, which I think worthy of the notice of us all. During a debate on the sums to be voted for the *navy*, GENERAL LAMARQUE spoke, it seems, as follows:

"General Lamarque, in speaking of  
"the *naval expenditure*, observed, that it  
"was not against Prussia or Austria that  
"armaments made by France would be  
"destined. It was *England*,—England

" alone, every year, rendered an ex-  
 " penditure of 50,000,000 or 60,000,000  
 " necessary! The amount since the re-  
 " storation was nearly one milliard; and  
 " yet recollections of the past, embitter-  
 " ed with resentment, the *uncertainty of*  
 " *the present*, and anxiety respecting  
 " the future, induce you to vote immense  
 " sums, which, applied to roads, canals,  
 " manufactures, and agriculture, would  
 " give a tenfold increase of wealth and  
 " prosperity to France. Were war to  
 " break out between England and  
 " France, a fatal event, the supposition  
 " of which the wishes and the interests  
 " of two great nations doubtless reject;  
 " we shall have only two ways of reach-  
 " ing the giant of the ocean, who, with  
 " his thousand arms, surrounds and  
 " grasps the globe. First, to attack at  
 " all points the commerce which feeds  
 " him; that commerce without which  
 " he cannot live; and with large frigates,  
 " with light squadrons appearing sud-  
 " denly on every sea, return upon him,  
 " with good faith, after a declaration of  
 " war, the evils which have frequently  
 " been inflicted on us in the *midst of*  
 " *peace by enemies acting like pirates*,  
 " who are now punished, but who would,  
 " doubtless, without a blush, be imitated  
 " in future. If the attack directed against  
 " commerce should not be sufficient, the  
 " enemy must then be *grappled with*  
 " *hand to hand*, and for this steam will  
 " afford the means. Steam seems desti-  
 " ned, as was well said by the reporter,  
 " to establish equality on the seas, as  
 " gunpowder was on land. It will ren-  
 " der useless naval tactics, of which  
 " Tourville was the inventor, but which  
 " has proved more advantageous to our  
 " neighbours than to us. It will set  
 " aside the advantages of a windward  
 " position, of breaking the line, or  
 " doubling a line, and of all those  
 " complicated evolutions, which at  
 " Saintes, Aboukir, and Trafalgar,  
 " secured to our rivals triumphs  
 " which our mariners might otherwise  
 " have wrested from them. Naval bat-  
 " tles will, perhaps, become what they  
 " were in the time of the Romans; con-  
 " tests in which intrepidity, address,  
 " physical force, and numbers will give

" the victory. Ah! had not he who, from  
 " the heights of Boulogne so long threat-  
 " ened England, *rejected the offers*  
 " *made to him for four years by the*  
 " *American Fulton*, it would not have  
 " been as a captive that he would have  
 " visited the banks of the Thames. The  
 " forts, and all the works which terror  
 " raised on the other side of the channel,  
 " would no more have impeded the  
 " march of the army of Austerlitz than  
 " the fencibles or the yeomanry. Other  
 " destinies would then have been re-  
 " served for the world; and had Provi-  
 " dence, which has willed that France  
 " should be free, brought back amongst  
 " us the ancient race of our Kings, they  
 " would *not have returned with a fo-*  
 " *reign chief, who, stripping our Mu-*  
 " *seums, violating capitulations, tram-*  
 " *pling on our national pride*, proved  
 " to us, as Closterseven proved to our  
 " fathers, that the traditions of puni-  
 " c faith had survived Carthage."

Now, my Lord Duke, I do not pretend  
 to believe that there is any *immediate*  
 danger of the French Government act-  
 ing in this spirit and upon this plan;  
 but I have often said; I said it fourteen  
 years ago, that the *museums of Paris*,  
 and the *capitulation of Paris*, would  
 never be forgotten by the French.

When the first steam-boat from Ire-  
 land to London was talked of, I said,  
 that if steam-boats could go even from  
 Cork to Bristol, they could much more  
 easily come from BOULOGNE to *Peven-*  
*sey Level*; and that thus if another war  
 with France should come (and come it  
 must), it would be not a maritime war,  
 but a war on *English ground*; for there  
 are steam-boats in America, each of  
 which will carry *more than two thou-*  
*sand people*. The expense of steam-  
 boats, compared with that of ships, is  
 such a perfect trifle, that it is not worth  
 naming. No maritime force can be a  
 defence against invasion carried on in  
 this manner; and, therefore, we ought to  
 look to it in time. The French are a  
 very *polite* people: their statesmen are  
 surprisingly polite, and by no means  
 less careful how they say offensive  
 things; but it is not in nature, that either

people or Government should not thirst for revenge. I have heard of a Frenchman, who went and stamped with rage upon that silly thing called "*Waterloo Bridge*," swearing that its name should be changed. The French have given incontestible proofs of their great valour. They must change their nature before they cease to thirst for an opportunity of regaining the glory which they lost at the last peace; and, therefore, again I say, we ought to be prepared; for our great maritime force would be of no use in another war against France; and, indeed, as GENERAL LAMARQUE says, if NAPOLEON had not rejected the offers of COLONEL FULTON, there never would have been a "*Battle of Waterloo*," and you never would have been a Duke. COLONEL FULTON, who was the inventor of the steam-boat, urged NAPOLEON to adopt it. "There," said he, "is your army, in sight of the coast of SUSSEX; there are places of landing without number; there are your boats; and I will furnish you with something to set winds and tides at defiance." The conceited and vain coxcomb would not listen to him. FULTON took his invention to America, and it found its way back to England and France. Steam-boats can carry cannon; can be so constructed as to blow ships of war to atoms; they can go any where, and in any weather; and I again repeat, that the next war with France will be and must be a war for the defence of England itself. Steam-boats can go with equal facility from France to Ireland; but, from the coast of SUSSEX and KENT you see the heights of BOULOGNE, and the sail is that of only a few hours. A hundred steam-boats, costing about as much as two or three first-rate ships of war, would clap on our coast an army of a hundred thousand men, all well provided, and ready for the fight.

This is a great change: it takes from us the main thing upon which we have relied. War with France *may* be at a great distance; but it *may* also be very near at hand. In short, as the French tell us, that to be prepared against England it costs them two millions of pounds sterling every year or more; so we may

truly say that it costs us eight or ten millions a-year to be in a state of preparation against France. This state of things cannot last for ever: the embers are hot, and it requires but very little to make them blaze. It is easy to perceive that the French wish for the success of Russia against the Turks, wish the Russians to be in possession of Constantinople; and this wish is founded in hostility to England. It is pretty clear also, that the French have some designs on Portugal: if they act upon those designs, out we must come, or at once give up all pretensions to national power. Suppose a war then to come, and find us in our *present state*! The thing is too fearful to look at. We must face it, however, steam-boats and all.

Turning from this subject to the state of the country, I have to inform you that the steam-boats on the Thames have *reduced their fares one-half*, and have not half custom at those reduced fares. I have to inform you, that the farmers in Lincolnshire are more than one-half insolvent. I have to inform you, that at no great distance from Chichester several farms are already let for the *payment of the rates alone*, including the road and church-rates; but without any rent to the landlords. I have to inform you, that the little *country boxes* round London, together with a considerable part of the *great mansions*, are now without tenants. I have to inform you, that amongst the farmers nothing is talked of but ruin, insolvency, and the giving up of farms. I have to inform you, besides, that the land was never, within the memory of man, in so bad a state of cultivation as it is now; great numbers of the farms beginning to look like estates in Chancery.

If you do not believe these facts now, you soon will believe them: they will press themselves upon you, and compel you to pay attention to them. In your answer to an application for the means of transporting 4,000 Spitalfields weavers to Botany Bay, you were pleased to observe, that their distresses arose from causes "*over which the Government had no control*." Strange, this! The Government, including the Parliament, of

course, has had full control in the imposing of taxes, creating debts, raising armies, making free trade, making paper-money, making five-pound and one-pound notes; abolishing these; in short, it has had full and uncontrolled power to do just what it pleased with all the resources, all the property, and all the persons of the people. And is it not strange, then, for a Minister to say, that it has had no hand in producing, and has had no control over, the causes, of the distresses of that part of the people who now petition to be transported from their native land!

There were not wanting men to remonstrate with the Government, at the various stages of the progress which has led to this result; men to beseech it not to contract such enormous debts, and to keep established such an expensive military and naval force, and to support such a dead-weight; such bands of placemen, pensioners, and sinecure people; and make such vast improvements in palaces, and arches, and such ornamental concerns. There have not been wanting men to remonstrate thus; to represent the consequences, and particularly the consequences of the system of paper-money. Their forebodings have all been realised; and yet the Prime Minister tells the wretched people, that their miseries arise from causes over which the Government has no control.

By about Christmas some measure or other will be adopted by the Government, or the farms will be deserted by whole districts together: we shall then have a change of some sort; and will it still be said, that the evil has arisen from causes over which the Government has had no control?

WM. COBBETT.

### WATER-PROOF COMPOSITION FOR LEATHER.

MR. HUNT has a patent for this Composition; and, I think it a *duty to my readers* to state my experience of it. Nobody need be told of the great value of any thing which will prevent feet getting wet, by walking in the dirt, or in

wet grass. To make the leather less susceptible of soaking, we nail our shoes. To keep the wet at a distance from our feet, we wear *thick soles*; and I have shoes with soles three-quarters of an inch thick, which load the legs enormously, and which, after all, do not keep out the wet, and take eight or ten hours or more, to dry them after they have been wet. I can now wear a pair of thin-soled shoes, for any length of time, in wet grass, in dirt, in water; and I never find the bottom of my stockings damp more than if I had been walking in the dry. The application is only to the sole; but sportsmen (and other people, if they like) may also apply it to the upper leathers. They know what a fuss they have with bees-wax and tallow, to keep out the wet: and they do not succeed after all. There may be a polish over the composition, which is not at all of a greasy nature, and which strengthens the leather, while it renders it impervious to water. I should have mentioned this composition before, but I wished to wait till I had tried it on the *apron of a gig*, which I have now done; and I declare it to be effectual for the purpose. We know that leather has been found so insufficient to keep the wet from the knees and legs, that recourse has, at last, been had to *wood*, which is very unsightly, as well as cumbrous. The Composition, while it leaves the leather as pliant as it was before, is effectual for keeping out the wet; there being no *soaking*, the surface wet is gone in a minute, and there is no moulding and no dampness to follow, as the consequence of rain. I shall only add, that, if the proprietor of this patent had been a bitter and unjust enemy, I should have availed myself of his Composition, and have said nothing about it; but if he had been a person that I had never heard of before, I should have said of it what I have now said, and should, as I have now done, have permitted it to be sold at my shop in Fleet Street; I being convinced that it is one of the most useful inventions that ever was offered to the public; as, perhaps, more than one-half of the ailments that afflict us, arises from wet or damp feet.



### ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN.

THE Second Number of this work is now published. The title is "Advice to Young Men, and incidentally and *with great diffidence*, to Young Women, in the middle and higher ranks of life." I have begun with the YOUTH, and shall go to the YOUNG MAN or the BACHELOR, talk the matter over with him as a LOVER, then consider him in the character of HUSBAND; then as FATHER; then as CITIZEN or SUBJECT; though if he will be ruled by me, he will, if he can, contrive to exist in the former of these two capacities. Such will be the nature of my work; or, rather, such will be the division of it. Each number will contain thirty pages of print; will be covered by a wrapper made of the CORN PAPER, which will have notices, advertisements, and the like, in the usual way. The work is intended to contain twelve Numbers, to be published on the first day of every month, and the price of each Number will be *Sixpence*. So that for six shillings, expended in one year of his life, I do believe that any Youth or Young Man may acquire that knowledge, which will enable him to pass the rest of his life with as little as possible of those troubles and inconveniences which arise from want of being warned of danger in time. At any rate, I, who have passed safely through as many dangers as any man that ever lived, will give my young countrymen the means of acquiring all the knowledge relative to these matters, which my experience has given me.

### INDEXES.

GENTLEMEN who are in the habit of keeping the numbers of the Register for the purpose of having them bound up in volumes, must have observed that, for some time, I have published no *Indexes*, and that there are now four volumes wanting these, as well as *Title-pages* and tables of *Contents*. These are all now printed and ready for delivery.

The whole four Indexes, with their respective Title-pages and tables of Contents, may be had *separately* for 3d. each, or *all stitched together* for 1s.; but, as it is impossible for me to know what number of readers I have who are so careful as to keep, and have bound up, the Register, I do not know what is likely to be the extent of the demand for these Indexes, and, therefore, to guard against any loss by over printing, a very limited number is struck off; and, lest it should be too small a number, the press will be kept standing for a month, from *Saturday the 30th of June*. Gentlemen residing in distant parts of the country, in Ireland, and in Scotland, will have ample time to order their indexes before the expiration of a month; and if any neglect to do it, it will be their own faults. I have always hitherto published these things in the *quarter-sheet* attached to the Register, causing no additional expense to my readers; but those readers are aware, that to suit the tastes of the Commissioners of Stamps, I was compelled, some time ago, to change the *form* of the Register, reduce it to a much smaller bulk, and altogether abandon the *quarter sheet*; and, in short, to make it so small that to publish indexes in it in future would be to occupy more room than I have to spare.

I HAVE just published, at No. 183, Fleet Street, a translation from the Greek of the celebrated Oration of DEMOSTHENES against LEPTINES. This translation is by DANIEL FRENCH, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, Barrister at Law. Price 4s. 6d. It is an octavo book, stitched, upon excellent paper, containing a hundred and twenty pages of print.

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I cannot trust myself to offer an opinion upon the following works, for reasons which will suggest themselves to every reader, particularly, if he be the father of sons for whom he justly entertains the greatest affection. I shall, therefore, simply observe, that they all have had a very considerable sale; and that I wish them to have a sale, far surpassing, if possible, any thing written by myself.

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